

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAM-01

SAB-01 OMB-01 IO-10 /075 W
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R 261320Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8407

INFO CINCEUR VAIHINGEN FRG

DIA WASHDC

OASD/ISA

JCS WASHDC

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1. YITZHAK IRONI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD), DIED SUDDENLY OF A HEART ATTACK IN NEW YORK ON SEPT 25. SINCE APRIL 1974, HE HAS BEEN THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND HIS UNTIMELY DEATH LEAVES A LARGE VOID.

2. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WHEN LT. GEN (RES) ZVI TZUR RESIGNED AS DEPUTY TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN MARCH 1974, MAJOR GENERAL (RES) MORDECHAI HOD WAS GIVEN THE TITLE BUT ASSUMED ONLY A NARROW SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES. MOST OF THESE WERE GIVEN TO IRONI, IN ADDITION TO THE ALREADY HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES HE HAD IN THE DIRECTOR GENERAL POSITION.

3. SINCE THE PRINCIPAL FUNCTION OF THE DEFENSE MINSITRY INVOLVES PROCUREMENT/PRODUCTION OF ARMS, IRONI WAS EXCEPTIONALLY WELL QUALIFIED FOR THE JOB. HE WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF ISRAEL MILITARY INDUSTRIES (ASST. DIR/GEN, 1950-57; DEPUTY DIR/GEN, 1957-67; DIR/GEN 1967-72). SINCE 1972 HE HAD BEEN DIRECTOR GENERAL AT
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THE DEFENSE MINISTRY.

4. IT HAD BEEN REPORTED IN RECENT WEEKS THAT IRONI WANTED TO RESIGN. DURING SEPT 25 CONVERSATION WITH CHIEF OF SECURITY, CHAIM CARMON, DATT CONFIRMED THAT IRONI WAS LEAVING HIS POST, WITH POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT BECOME COORDINATOR BETWEEN THE MINISTRY AND ISRAEL'S DEFENSE INDUSTRIES. HIS REPLACEMENT AS DIR/GEN HAD NOT BEEN DETERMINED.

5. COMMENT: FACT THAT MOD HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVING THOUGHT TO QUESTION OF IRONI'S SUCCESSOR MAY EASE PROBLEM, BUT HIS DEATH CERTAINLY REPRESENTS A GREAT LOSS OF CONTINUITY. HIS REPLACEMENT WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TASK TAKING OVER COMPLEX DUTIES WITHOUT BENEFIT OF IRONI'S GUIDANCE. THIS PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT MAJOR GENERAL (RES) ISRAEL TAL IS COMING IN FROM THE OUTSIDE TO TAKE OVER THE NUMBER TWO POSITION AS ASSISTANT TO MINISTER ON OCT 1. PRESUMABLY, HE ALSO WILL ABSORB SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL DUTIES WHICH IRONI HAD BORNE SINCE 1974.

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